



(U//FOUO) InSIDer's View of History: 'Local Support' as Stress Management

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(S//SI//REL) Note from SIGINT Communications: To mark the [25th anniversary of the Special Collection Service \(SCS, aka F6\)](#), we asked former SCS'ers to contribute stories. Here's one from [REDACTED]

(S//SI//REL) At a location where the F6 daily "local support" folder for the Embassy leadership included untranslated counterterrorism-related reports and drug lord transcriptions (the latter often included such colorful language that even a native speaker might stumble over some of the phrases), I was summoned one day to the Ambassador's office to answer some questions.

(S//SI//REL) The Ambassador, a highly sophisticated, educated and well-known New York lawyer who prided himself on his knowledge of the local language, called his Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and me into his office and closed the door. Given the dangerous terrorism situation in the country -- terrorists had just blown the entire front off of our Embassy the week before -- I was sure that I was about to hear about the most serious threat yet and sat poised on the edge of a chair, notepad at the ready.

(U//FOUO) The Ambassador turned to me and asked [REDACTED] how do you translate ((long string of foreign-language expletives))?" Well, my tested proficiency in even the polite form of the language was only 3/3, but I could sort out enough of the drift of the expletives to be rendered totally speechless. Rather than belt out to our dapper, distinguished Ambassador a long string of words more unsavory than most have ever heard, I told him I had no idea; such reporting wasn't, after all, my specialty, and this was pretty esoteric language.

(U//FOUO) The Ambassador then turned to his deputy and repeated the question. The DCM, a very polished yet wonderfully down-to-earth and dutiful man, was as stunned as I and was silent. His face started to redden, and after about half a minute, the Ambassador asked him again more sternly, since he knew that the DCM was fluent in the language. Well, perfect deputy as he was when questioned by his boss, he eventually took a deep breath and let fly with a perfect translation into English. The Ambassador leaned back, grinned and said, "I thought that's what it meant!"

(U//FOUO) Moral: interagency collaboration is truly rewarding, though at times the subjects are unspeakable...

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